

## Ben Murphy

by Doug Kent

It is not often our story begins in our country's heartland. It was a fairly quiet day on March 12, 1946 in Oklahoma City until Mr. December's mother told his father to rush her to the hospital. Mr. December (Mr. D) was the 6<sup>th</sup> of 7 children and he had very little chance to get into trouble with his 2 sisters and 4 brothers watching his every move. He attended the Putnam City Public School System from the first to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. He was a good student and was involved in the Journalism and Spanish Clubs. During high school he worked part time at a local print shop and learned the printing trade. Learning this trade would serve him well throughout his entire life.

Upon graduation in 1964, Mr. D attended Central State College, but continued to work part time and summers at the print shop. In 1966 he lost his 2S deferment and was drafted into the Army. He developed some breathing problems after basic training and was given a medical discharge in that same year. He returned home and worked in a different print shop for the next year.

Mr. D applied for a police and fire dispatcher position in a neighboring suburb called Warr Acres. He spent a year and a half there making good, but not great, money. He also met a girlfriend while he was dispatcher and her father told Mr. D about a better position (more money) as dispatcher for the fire department in Oklahoma City. Driven by the possibility of making better money he applied for the position and was hired. In 1969 he broke up with his girlfriend and resigned as dispatcher.

It was at this time that a friend of Mr. D invited him for coffee at a local restaurant. His friend asked Mr. D if he was gay. He was stunned by his friend's question and a bit confused; his friend then admitted that he was gay. The next evening, they both got dressed up and went to a local gay bar. It was at this bar that Mr. D eventually met his first long term partner Gary. That same year, Mr. D applied for and was given the position of Manager of the Print Shop for American Fidelity Insurance Company. He was there a total of 15 years and advanced to the position as Head of Advertising.

The owner had a daughter who was gay, and Mr. D and the daughter became friends. Together they both felt that working for themselves would be better than working for others. So in May 1988,

they started their own printing company called "Printers of Oklahoma". It was a struggle at first, but hard work and some lucky breaks made the business a success over the next 25 years. It was during this period that Mr. D met Ed, his second long term partner. They were together for 15 years when Ed passed in 1995.

In 1996 Mr. D met his current partner and they purchased some land and began raising "American Miniature Horses". In 1997 they began a very successful Limousine service in the Oklahoma City area. They enjoyed traveling and vacationed in the South Florida area, and finally purchased a vacation place here in 2011. They sold the Limo business in 2006 and the printing business in March 2012. His Oklahoma City home sold in just 3 days.

A member of the Oklahoma City Prime Timers, Mr. D had no trouble making friends here in South Florida. He has always enjoyed boating, social events with friends, musical plays, travel and exploring Florida. He and his current partner are active in Prime Timers and part of the Palm Aire community. Can you identify our December Prime Timer?

